

Targeted radioactive treatment offers promise in curing cancer

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by Kevin John

Cancer is one of the leading causes of death across the world — it is estimated that there will be more than 600,000 cancer deaths in the United States this year. And despite billions of dollars that go toward cancer research, a cure remains elusive. But a radioactive isotope called actinium could be a new breakthrough in cancer research.

An exciting new method is on the horizon. In 2015, the Department of Energy's Office of Science, Office of Nuclear Physics, Isotope Development and Production for Research and Applications Program launched an unprecedented campaign to develop and provide a supply of actinium-225. It is a rare, radioactive medical isotope that may just hold the cure to some types of cancer. Los Alamos National Laboratory produces actinium-225 for use in targeted radiotherapy and it will soon be tested on volunteer patients. Early results elsewhere are promising.

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